

We Claim:

1. A method of forming a cushioning pad comprising the steps of:
providing a first web of a first material; a second web of a second material; and a
component of a third material;
5 placing the component on the first web;
covering the component with the second web;
compressing the component to a substantially flattened state between the first web
and the second web, as the first web, the component and the second web simultaneously
pass through a gap formed between a pair of pressing members;
10 attaching the second web to the first web to form a seam completely surrounding
the component, thereby encapsulating the component, as the first web, the component and
the second web simultaneously pass through the gap formed between the pair of pressing
members;
forming an opening in at least one of the first web, the second web, or in a seam
15 between the first web and the second web, which opening passes to the component; and
allowing air to pass through the opening into the component, such that the
component expands in size from its substantially flattened state.
2. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of:
20 heating the first web and the second web during said attaching step.
3. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

applying an adhesive to at least one of the first web and the second web during said attaching step.

4. The method according to claim 1, wherein said allowing step includes injecting air
5 into the component.

5. The method according to claim 1, wherein said forming step includes forming the opening in the seam between the first web and the seam, said method further comprising the step of:
10 re-attaching the first web to the second web to close the opening after said allowing step.

6. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of:
installing a grommet around a perimeter of the opening.
15

7. The method according to claim 1, wherein the third material is polyurethane.

8. The method according to claim 1, wherein the first material is the same as the second material.
20

9. The method according to claim 1, wherein the first material and the second material are polyethylene foam.

10. The method according to claim 1, wherein at least one of the first material and the second material includes a layer of vinyl.

11. The method according to claim 1, wherein at least one of the first material and the
5 second material includes a layer of fabric.

12. The method according to claim 1, wherein the first material includes a layer of polyethylene foam and the second material includes a layer of polyethylene foam, and wherein at least one of the first material and the second material also includes a layer of
10 vinyl.

13. The method according to claim 1, wherein the first material includes a layer of polyethylene foam and the second material includes a layer of polyethylene foam, and wherein at least one of the first material and the second material also includes a layer of
15 fabric.

14. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of:
cutting along at least a portion of the seam surrounding the component to size the
pad.

20

15. The method according to claim 1, wherein the pressing members are rollers.